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13 October 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Hitchcock

SUBJECT : Comments on Improving the Utility of CIRIS

1. How could CIRIS be better used year round? How should CIRIS be related more closely to the review process? You have asked for comments on these questions.

2. CIRIS targeting should be on a twice a year basis rather than once a year. We now get inputs from the January FYDP update as our principal data source. This is pertinent for the spring and summer program reviews. However, a second input based on the PDMS would provide a six-months-later insight that would serve in support of decision-making during the fall and winter.

3. CIRIS should be expanded with respect to its targeting vocabulary. We have found by experience that CIRIS cuts are not fine enough for most issue analysis purposes. Consequently, in the new CIRIS for the CY-71 cycle we are proposing a considerable expansion of geographic and subject targets. Since any expansion of detailed targeting requires additional work to prepare the data inputs, we hope that this proposal will be accepted and supported by policy management.

4. We need clarification as to the customers CIRIS should be expected to serve, since CIRIS must be designed to meet customer needs. Heretofore, the customers have been assumed to be principally the DCI mechanisms (for community-wide analysis) and DASD(I) (for DoD-wide analysis). DASD(I) has taken steps to tie CIRIS into the DoD programming mechanism for its own program reviews. This has had the result of making the DoD Program Managers and the Military Intelligence Service Chiefs potential CIRIS customers, with use requirements that are likely to be more detailed and somewhat different from those at the community and DASD(I) level--the community and DASD(I) requirements reflect pretty much the same need and hence I do not see a distinction in the level as between these two. The question is how many customers can CIRIS successfully serve, and how do we reach specific agreement on what CIRIS will do and will not do?

5. We have had an inadequate dialogue and interaction with the DoD institutions and organizations mentioned above. Although we must be careful how the idea is expressed, the fundamental fact is that DASD(I) needs to make a larger manpower investment in CIRIS in order to [ ] ILLEGIB to this problem. DASD(I) needs to do more in monitoring CIRIS inputs and in the use of CIRIS data for its own purposes. A more thorough job needs to be done by DASD(I) in its continuing relations with the PMs and Services for the purpose of CIRIS system-building, and a greater investment needs to

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be made in the exploration of the potential significance of CIRIS-type data in relation to issue analysis and other uses.

6. One always present problem with program reviews is the inadequacy of time available to prepare and to conduct these exercises. This is everyone's constant dirge and it is a problem that is not controllable solely by intelligence management. The problem begins with the availability (or non-availability) and the correctness (or incorrectness) of data provided by the Comptroller of the Defense Department. Program exercises must end at predetermined times, but they cannot begin until the Comptroller's information is furnished. Invariably there is a time squeeze which dilutes the quality of the submitters' proposals and limits the extent of reviews.

7. This situation can be improved if review activities can be conducted on a year round basis so that less needs to be considered during the crunch periods in the late spring and summer. While a twice a year CIRIS targeting exercise would be helpful, even more desirable -- at least in concept -- would be a system whereby CIRIS was kept updated constantly as a normal and routine part of the flow of program change proposals throughout the year. This is not insolvable, but at present the commitment of DASD(I) staff resources to tackle this problem has been inadequate.

8. Another problem which would be lessened if DASD(I)'s participation in CIRIS development were expanded relates to the quality of data submits. In the past we have had very large numbers of errors, which have been partly mechanical and partly due to apparent misunderstanding of what CIRIS is all about. DASD(I), by a show of continuing interest, could require a higher degree of accuracy by the PMs in their submits, which would result in shorter processing time for machine inputting and a more prompt output of CIRIS reports.

9. A further question relates to the character of the CIRIS data base. One might describe the function and target type data as "substantive" and the information about the types of manpower, or the types of dollars, or the identification of a Program Element, or a command relationship, etc. as "institutional" type data. Community-wide analysis of intelligence problems is most concerned with the "substantive" CIRIS information. On the other hand, intelligence managers require overviews, must prepare fiscal guidance, must submit budgets, etc. and they require "institutional" data for these purposes. One might say that the "institutional" type data are required to characterize the type of resources, and the "substantive" type data are required to characterize the use of the resources.

10. There has been some question raised as to whether CIRIS should concern itself at all with the "institutional" type data, arguing that

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CIRIS is not intended to support budget preparation and such matters. I would reply, however, that the "institutional" type information must be utilized in CIRIS in order to properly identify and explain the significance of the resources that are to be applied to substantive ends. In this sense, the institutional language and data inputs in CIRIS must be utilized in order to put together the properly comparable bits of resources on a given substantive problem. It is misleading, for example, to reflect in CIRIS that the total dollar cost against "x" target is "y", if one does not also make known that 3/4 of "y" is for R&D purposes and 1/4 is for the current costs of operating manpower.

11. In other words, I believe that CIRIS should contain the institutional language, as a preliminary means of being able to arrange our data meaningfully by substantive topics. The fact that this makes it possible for CIRIS data to be used from time to time to answer an administrative or institutional question does not mean that CIRIS has become a financial accounting system - which was never contemplated in the original concept of CIRIS.

12. Because of the nature of institutional information, however, we must recognize that it is complicated and laborious to provide detailed CIRIS inputs. It is equally laborious and costly to write software programs to accommodate the many varieties of data that potentially might be displayable. A practical judgment must be made as to how much the CIRIS effort is worth to its users. This brings us back to the need for greater clarification as to who ought to be the users. Having decided that, greater effort should be made by policy management to see that CIRIS is used. Only by investing in a better understanding of CIRIS use and by insuring that it is actually used can we justify the costs of obtaining and processing these data and the elaborate EDP programming efforts that are now required. Judgments of this sort can be made only at the policy management level.

  
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